

Michigan law enforcement cracking down on drunk drivers over July 4th

WEST MICHIGAN PILOT PROJECT TO INCLUDE INCREASED VISIBILITY OF NIGHT PATROLS

Motorists are being warned not to let this Fourth of July fizzle by driving drunk as more than 160 Michigan law enforcement

agencies in 44 counties will put out special patrols

June 29-July 8 to keep the roadways safe throughout the holiday period.

The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) is coordinating an Over the Limit. Under Arrest. drunk driving crackdown by administering federal traffic safety funds to more than 170 agencies in 44 counties. Grant-funded counties include Allegan, Alpena, Barry, Bay, Berrien,

Calhoun, Charlevoix, Chippewa, Clinton, Delta, Eaton, Genesee, Gogebic, Grand Traverse, Hillsdale, Ionia, Iron, Isabella, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Marquette, Menominee, Midland, Monroe, Montcalm, Oakland, Oceana, Ogemaw, Otsego, Ottawa, Roscommon, Saginaw,

Schoolcraft, Shiawassee, St. Joseph, Van Buren, Washtenaw, Wayne and Wexford.

In addition, law enforcement agencies in Kalamazoo and Kent counties are participating in a High Visibility Enforcement (HVE) project. The "West Michigan Night Patrol," seeks to make late-night enforcement more visible through unique tactics and special advertising messages.

To enhance visibility, officers from multiple agencies will work a specific roadway. Lighted message signs, typically used during road construction, will alert motorists of the special enforcement effort. The signs are courtesy of the Michigan Department of Transportation. In addition, officers will wear reflective traffic vests, helping to identify this as a special traffic program.

The pilot HVE project includes television and radio ads specific to West Michigan that will air on programming popular with men, age 21 to 34.

The idea of combining safety belt and drunk driving enforcement came following an analysis of Michigan traffic fatalities this winter. While Michigan has significantly increased safety belt use in recent years, the data analysis revealed a marked drop in belt use during late night hours. Safety belt use in daytime fatal crashes is 73 percent, but that figure falls to 44 percent at night (10 p.m. to 5 a.m.). Crash data also indicates a high correlation between alcohol and unbuckled occupants in night-time fatal crashes.

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Governor vetoes helmet law repeal

For the second time, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm has vetoed a bill which would have repealed Michigan's current motorcycle helmet law.

House Bill 4749 would have allowed motorcycle operators to purchase a helmet exemption permit for \$100 per year. The revenue generated by these permits would have been used for law enforcement programs.

Based on analysis conducted by the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning, a repeal of Michigan's mandatory motorcycle helmet law would likely lead to an annual increase of at least 30 fatalities, 127 incapacitating injuries, and \$129 million in economic costs. Helmet repeals in other states have generated significant increases in fatalities, injuries, and economic costs. As an example, following helmet repeals, fatalities increased 21 percent in Arkansas, 31 percent in Texas, over 50 percent in Kentucky, and 100 percent in Louisiana. In Louisiana, the helmet law was reinstated in 2004

In her veto letter, Governor Granholm stated that an unhelmeted motorcyclist involved in a crash is 40 percent more likely to suffer a fatal injury and 15 percent more likely to suffer a non-fatal injury than a helmeted rider.





Kechkaylo joins OHSP staff



The Office of Highway Safety Planning's Communications Section has welcomed a new staff member—Alyson Kechkaylo.

Kechkaylo is a graduate of Central

Michigan University with a bachelor's degree in Integrative Public Relations. While at CMU, she was involved with a student-run public relations firm, where she was honored as Account Executive of the Year during her senior year.

Before coming to OHSP, Kechkaylo was a communications representative at the Michigan Lottery, where she got to meet with winners who were claiming prizes over \$50,000. During her three years at Lottery, she once was involved in awarding a \$208 million prize.

Prior to working at Lottery, she was an account administrator for Canadian American, a small advertising agency, where she worked with Subway restaurants.

As OHSP's media relations and outreach coordinator, Kechkaylo will promote traffic safety initiatives among local media, as well as coordinate facilities for OHSP's Michigan Traffic Safety Summit.

Agencies to increase patrols END-OF-SUMMER DRUNK DRIVING CRACKDOWN

In an effort to ensure the summer ends safely in Michigan, nearly 350 law enforcement agencies in fifty-five counties will be taking part in a statewide drunk driving crackdown August 15- September 1.

The Over the Limit. Under Arrest. drunk driving crackdown includes the Labor Day holiday weekend, which typically marks the end of the summer travel season. According to the Michigan State Police, Criminal Justice Information Center, 14 people died in traffic crashes on Michigan roadways during the 2007 Labor Day holiday period. Four of those deaths involved alcohol.

The following counties are taking part in the crackdown: Allegan, Alpena, Barry, Bay, Berrien, Calhoun, Cass, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Chippewa, Clinton, Delta, Dickinson, Eaton, Emmet, Genesee, Gogebic, Grand Traverse, Hillsdale, Ingham, Ionia, Iron, Isabella, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Lapeer, Leelanau, Lenawee, Livingston, Mackinac, Macomb, Marquette, Mason, Menominee, Midland, Monroe, Montcalm, Muskegon, Oakland, Oceana, Ogemaw, Otsego, Ottawa, Roscommon, Saginaw, Sanilac, Schoolcraft, St. Clair, St. Joseph, Shiawassee, Van Buren, Washtenaw, Wayne and Wexford.

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This new venture is modeled after a successful program in Minnesota. The two participating counties were selected based on their number of alcohol-involved fatalities and serious injuries and an interest in the program. Kent ranks third in the state and Kalamazoo ranks sixth based on data from 2003-2007.

During last year's July 4th holiday period, four people died on Michigan roadways, with two of those fatalities involving alcohol. Despite a 13 percent drop in impaired driving related fatalities in 2007, alcohol and/or drugs are involved in 35 percent of Michigan traffic fatalities. Overall, 382 traffic fatalities involved alcohol and/or drugs last year.

Traffic Safety Summit is March 24-26

The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) is hosting the 14th Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit, March 24-26, 2009, at the Kellogg Center in East

OHSP is seeking ideas for general sessions and workshop topics for the annual conference through August 31. A topic suggestion form can be found at www. michigan.gov/ohsp.

Booster seat law in effect July 1

NEW LAW REQUIRES CHILDREN UNDER AGE 8, 4'9" TALL TO USE **CHILD RESTRAINTS**

Michigan's new booster law takes effect July 1, 2008, and requires children who are not yet 8 years old or 4' 9" to ride in a properly fitting child safety seat or booster seat. Informational materials are being distributed to licensed day care centers, Head Start programs, local public health departments, and others to ensure parents and caregivers are aware of the new law.

In addition, billboards and radio and TV public service announcements will further remind parents of the new law.

For more information about the law and child safety and booster seats, visit www. michigansafekids.org. Informational flyers on the new booster seat law can be ordered by emailing trafficsafety@michigan.gov.



Dr. John Kepros, director of trauma services for Lansing's Sparrow Hospital, explains the potential risks to children's safety if they are not properly restrained in a booster seat.





Motorists get the message

SAFETY BELT CITATIONS, OTHER ARRESTS DOWN DURING STATEWIDE ENFORCEMENT EFFORT

Michigan motorists must have gotten the message that law enforcement were serious about buckling up, as officers noted a marked decline in unbelted motorists and issued far fewer belt citations than in past efforts. According to preliminary reports from participating agencies, 8,279 safety belt citations were issued during the recent *Buckle Up or Pay Up, Click It or Ticket* enforcement period.



Michigan State Police Lieutenant Chris Kelenske and Lansing Police Chief Mark Alley respond to questions about the statewide safety belt enforcement effort.

Between May 19 and June 1, officers across the state cited motorists who were not properly buckled in safety belt enforcement zones as well as during roving nighttime patrols. Of the 8,279 restraint citations issued, 156 were for children under 4 years old who were not properly restrained in a child safety seat.

Officers wrote 7,425 of these citations in grant-funded safety belt enforcement

zones. The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) administered federal traffic safety funds to agencies in 55 counties for the enforcement activity. The remainder of the citations were issued by agencies who conducted roving night-time patrols and law enforcement agencies that voluntarily agreed to make safety belt enforcement a priority during the enforcement period.

According to preliminary reports by the Michigan State Police, Criminal Justice Information Center, seven people died over the Memorial Day holiday period.

Part of the decline in citations could be attributed to an extensive two-week advertising blitz that forewarned motorists of the statewide enforcement effort. Advertisements, geared toward young men ages 18-34, included traditional television, radio and cable spots, as well as internet and movie theater ads, in-stadium ads at Comerica Park in Detroit and projection advertising in Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties.

The advertising buy was supported through federal traffic safety dollars. No state or general fund monies were used.

In addition to writing safety belt citations, law enforcement officers arrested 113 motorists for drunk driving. They also made 34 felony and 968 misdemeanor arrests and issued 996 speeding citations.



Tiger fans sign a pledge to always buckle up during a safety belt promotion at Comerica Park.

OHSP asking Tiger fans to pledge to drive safely

To promote safe driving, the Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) is asking Tiger fans to sign pledges to always wear their safety belts and to designate a sober driver during three home games this summer.

Fans who sign the pledge sheets will be entered to win a pair of tickets to an upcoming Detroit Tigers game. More than 350 fans signed the pledge to buckle up at the May 22 game, with two lucky fans winning tickets. Future pledge drives will be held during the June 26 and August 14 games.

In addition, OHSP has purchased advertising in the restrooms at Comerica Park that promote the *Buckle Up or Pay Up, Click It Or Ticket* safety belt mobilization and the Over the Limit. Under Arrest. drunk driving crackdown.

What's Ahead

JUL

- New booster seat law goes into effect www.michigansafekids.org
- 16 Ride Your Motorcycle to Work Day www.ridetowork.org

20-26 Intersection Enforcement Week www.michigan.gov/ohsp

AUGUST

- 3-9 National Stop on Red Week http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ intersections/srlr_week.htm
- 15-9/1 Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest. national crackdown http://stopimpaireddriving.org





Cell phones raise issues of safety, security, and privacy

By Kenneth Stecker Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor

Cell phones have become a valuable tool in the way we go about our daily lives. In the business world, employees use them to perform their jobs. They help boost productivity as employees can easily reach clients while driving from one destination to another. Cell phone commercials show teenagers typing text messages constantly to each other, with lingo they only understand. However, cell phones also raise a number of issues involving safety, security, and privacy.

For employers, there are liability issues. For example, if an employee has a traffic crash and injures someone else or himself/herself while making a work-related cell phone call, the employer as well as the employee may be found liable. Several lawsuits have been filed against employers as well as the employees themselves who have harmed someone allegedly because of cell phone use while driving and doing business at the same time.

If individuals must use cell phones while in their vehicles, the following safety guidelines may be helpful:

- Always dial while the car isn't moving.
- Never use the phone in heavy traffic or bad weather.
- Use speed dialing as much as possible.
- Use a hands-free phone.
- Never look up phone numbers while driving.
- Never have stressful conversations while driving.
- Keep your eyes on the road while on the phone.
- Keep conversations short.

WHAT IS MICHIGAN DOING?

There is no federal law that prohibits drivers from using mobile phones while driving, but some states and local jurisdictions have taken action.

In Michigan, on January 22, 2008, Senate Bill 1036 was introduced, which would ban the use of hand-held cell phones while driving. Under the bill, "use" means to initiate a call; answer a call; listen to or engage in verbal communication through the device; or type, send, or receive a text message or an instant message. There are exceptions to the bill including; reporting a traffic crash, medical emergency, serious road hazard, personal safety in jeopardy, reporting a potential crime, and for police officers to carry out their official duties.

Additionally, there are two bills in the State House of Representatives that will affect the use of cell phones while driving. House Bill 5117 would prohibit text messaging while driving and House Bill 4982 would ban the use of handheld phones. However, hands free devices would be permissible to use.

Supporters of the bills point to studies that found the use of such phones contributes to distracted driving and crashes. Opponents of the bills maintain that there is insufficient evidence to conclude mobile phones are any different from other distractions to drivers.

It should be noted that on June 1, 2008, the Michigan Department of State implemented a new license restriction for some probationary teen drivers in an effort to encourage safer driving and reduce crash risk. The "No cellular phone use while driving a motor vehicle" restriction will be applicable to probationary teen drivers, age 14.9 to 19 years, who disclose during a driver re-examination, that cellular phone use impacted a violation or event on their driving record.

WHAT ARE STATES DOING?

There are 141 pending bills in 18 states (AZ, DE, IA, IL, KS, LA, MA, **MI**, NH, NY, OH, OK, PA, RI, SC, TN, VA, and VT) that would either implement a new cell phone ban or strengthen an existing ban.

Five states (NY, OH, OK, PA and VT) have legislation that would ban the use of both handheld and hands-free cell phone use.

Sixteen states (AZ, DE, IA, IL, KS, LA, MA, MI, NY, OK, PA, RI, SC, TN, VT, and VA) have bills pending that would create a ban on the use of handheld cellular phones.

Thirteen states (AZ, IA, IL, LA, MA, **MI**, NY, OK, PA, SC, TN, VT, and VA) have legislation specific to teen drivers.

Fifteen states (AZ, DE, IA, IL, KS, LA, MA, **MI**, NH, NY, OH, OK, PA, RI, and TN) have bills that specifically reference text messaging.

Seven states (LA, **MI**, NY, OK, PA, RI, and TN) have bills that would restrict the use of cell phones by bus drivers.

Illinois has a bill pending that would restrict the use of cell phones by pedestrians crossing roadways.

Tennessee and Pennsylvania have bills that would ban the use of cell phones in school zones.

Tennessee has a bill pending that would prohibit a driver of trucks and truck tractors with a gross vehicle weight rating of 16,000 pounds or more from using a hand held mobile telephone while the vehicle is in motion on an interstate highway.

In conclusion, the best advice is that if an individual receives a cell phone call while driving, she/he should let voice mail answer it and/or call back when she/he can stop at a safe area. Common sense always should dictate paying attention to the road while driving!

Note: I would like to acknowledge Laurel B. Sims, Legal Assistant, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, for providing the updated pending cell phone legislation.









Teen drivers often ignore bans on using cell phones and texting

Teenage drivers' cell phone use edged higher in North Carolina after the state enacted a cell phone ban for young drivers, a new Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study finds. This is the case even though young drivers and their parents said they strongly support the restrictions. Parents and teens alike believe the ban on hand-held and hands-free phone use isn't being enforced. Researchers concluded that North Carolina's law isn't reducing teen drivers' cell phone use.

The two-part study coupled researchers' observations of teenage drivers with telephone surveys of teens and their parents in the first evaluation of a cell phone law for young drivers. North Carolina's ban for drivers younger than age 18 is part of the state's graduated licensing system.

Just one to two months prior to the ban's December 1, 2006, start, 11 percent of teen drivers were observed using cell phones as they left school in the afternoon. About five months after the ban took effect, almost 12 percent of teen drivers were observed using phones. Most drivers were using hand-helds. Nine percent were holding phones to their ears, while fewer than 1 percent were using hands-free devices. About 2 percent were observed dialing or texting. Cell phone use remained steady at about 13 percent at comparison sites

in South Carolina, where teen driver cell phone use isn't restricted.

Parents and teens support cell phone ban: When surveyed after the cell phone restrictions took effect, teenage drivers were more likely than parents to say they knew about the ban. Only 39 percent of parents said they were aware of the cell

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phone law, compared with 64 percent of teen drivers. Support for the ban was greater among parents (95 percent) than teens (74 percent). Eighty-eight percent of parents said that they restrict their teenage drivers' cell phone use, though only 66 percent of teenagers reported such parental limits. About half of the teenagers

surveyed after the law took effect admitted they had used their phones, if they had driven, on the day prior to the interview.

Restrictions are rarely enforced: Most parents and teen drivers agreed that police officers weren't looking for cell phone violators. Seventy-one percent of teens and 60 percent of parents reported that enforcement was rare or nonexistent. Only 22 percent of teenagers and 13 percent of parents surveyed believed the law was being enforced fairly often or a lot.

In both North Carolina and South Carolina, observed cell phone use was significantly higher among girls than among boys and higher when teens drove alone in vehicles rather than with friends. For example, 13 percent of female drivers and 9 percent of males were observed using cell phones in North Carolina before the law. Cell phone use was 14 percent among solo drivers and 8 percent among teens with one passenger. More SUV drivers than car drivers were viewed using phones.

Phone bans for young drivers are becoming commonplace as concerns mount about the contribution of distractions to teens' elevated crash risk. Seventeen states and the District of Columbia restrict both hand-held and hands-free phone use by young drivers. Six states and DC bar all drivers from using hand-helds. For a state-by-state list of cell phone laws, visit www.iihs.org.





NHTSA urges 15-passenger van users to drive with caution this summer

New research from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has found June through August to be the deadliest time of year for 15-passenger van occupants, due to rollover crashes. Statistics show that 31 percent of fatal rollovers involving 15-passenger vans occur during the busy summer travel months.

NHTSA data shows a significant increase in rollover risk when the van is fully loaded with drivers and passengers. In 2006, 50 percent of occupant fatalities that occurred were in vans that were fully loaded. Fifty-nine percent of those killed were unbelted.

Other factors that contribute to rollover incidents include improperly inflated tires, poor tire condition and inexperienced drivers. Owners should follow manufacturers' recommendations for replacing old tires because tires may become less safe after a certain period of time, even if they have adequate tread and proper inflation.

Overall statistics show the number of deaths in 15-passenger van rollover crashes has been declining steadily since 2001. However, these vehicles still pose a safety risk to occupants, claiming the lives of 58 people in accidents in 2006.

For more information about 15-passenger van safety visit www.safercar.gov.

Driving Skills for Life program is July 19

A partnership with the Michigan Department of State Police (MSP), Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP), and the Driving Skills for Life (DSFL) program is providing a training course designed to make teens better and safer drivers.

This free, innovative program on July 19 is sponsored by the Ford Motor Company Fund and the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA). Through it, teen drivers will have a unique opportunity to learn advanced driving skills with handson training provided by the MSP Precision Driving Unit at the MSP Training Academy in Lansing.

Teens will be behind the wheel to learn skid control, evasive maneuvering, controlled braking and off -road recovery. Other activities include vehicle maintenance (learning how to change a flat tire and check fluid levels); drunk driving simulation, and a safety belt convincer.

To be eligible, students must have a Level 2 Intermediate License under the Michigan Graduated Driver Licensing Program. Class size is limited and admission is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

DSFL was established in 2003 by Ford Motor Company Fund, the GHSA, and a panel of safety experts to teach newly licensed teens the necessary skills for safe driving beyond what they learn in standard driver education programs.

DSFL helps young drivers improve their skills in four key areas that are critical factors in more than 60 percent of vehicle crashes including: hazard recognition, vehicle handling, speed management, space management.

For more information, please contact Dianne Perukel at OHSP at (517) 333-5337.

Michigan Center for Truck Safety launches traffic safety radio campaign

The Michigan Center for Truck Safety (MCTS) has launched radio commercials for its *Are You Truck SMART?* (Safe Motoring and Responsible Transportation) traffic

safety campaign, a program educating the public on how to safely share the road with big trucks by providing tips on blind spots, stopping distances, merging and other issues...

"The goal of Are You Truck SMART? is to remind both professional drivers and the public to safely share the road, with an emphasis

on educating car drivers on the limitations of big trucks," said Michael T. Irwin, director, Michigan Center for Truck Safety. "Reminding motorists through radio commercials to safely share the road is one way we can all drive more safely."

Automobile drivers contribute 70 to 75 percent of all fatal car/truck crashes,

according to AAA and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

MCTS training programs includes a state-of-the-art mobile truck safety simulator, which plays a significant role in its core mission of preventing injuries and saving lives. The MCTS is funded through registration fees from the trucking industry. It provides

safety training to commercial drivers and promotes the concept that car and truck drivers need to "share the road."





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